

HOUSE No. 506

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Frank I. Smizik

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CHARTER SCHOOL WORKING GROUP.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Frank I. Smizik	15th Norfolk
Marc R. Pacheco	First Plymouth and Bristol
William N. Brownsberger	24th Middlesex
Christine E. Canavan	10th Plymouth
Stephen L. DiNatale	3rd Worcester
Paul J. Donato	35th Middlesex
James Dwyer	30th Middlesex
Mary E. Grant	6th Essex
Louis L. Kafka	8th Norfolk
Kay Khan	11th Middlesex
Barbara A. L'Italien	18th Essex
Matthew C. Patrick	3rd Barnstable
Robert L. Rice, Jr.	2nd Worcester
Pam Richardson	6th Middlesex
Tom Sannicandro	7th Middlesex
Patricia D. Jehlen	Second Middlesex
Kevin Aguiar	7th Bristol
Willie Mae Allen	6th Suffolk
Alice K. Wolf	25th Middlesex

David P. Linsky	5th Middlesex
Thomas M. Stanley	9th Middlesex
Katherine Clark	32nd Middlesex

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CHARTER SCHOOL WORKING GROUP.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. There is hereby established a charter school working group to study the costs and
2 benefits of charter schools, including the financing of, and the innovations promoted by, charter
3 schools authorized under the provisions of chapter 71, section 89. The working group shall also
4 study the obstacles which have limited the broader utilization of the Horace Mann model of
5 charter schools. The working group shall report its findings and conclusions to the general court
6 and make recommendations regarding any necessary legislative and regulatory changes which
7 are suggested by those findings and conclusions. The first meeting of the working group shall
8 take place within 30 days after the effective date of this act.

9 SECTION 2. The working group shall consist of: six legislators including the House and Senate
10 chairs of the Joint Committee on Education, and two members appointed by the President of the
11 Senate and two members appointed by the Speaker of the House, including one member in each
12 chamber from the minority party; the commissioner of education, or his designee; the secretary
13 of administration and finance, or her designee; and one representative each from the
14 Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Association of School
15 Superintendents, the Massachusetts Charter School Association, the Massachusetts Teachers
16 Association, the AFT-Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Taxpayers Association.

17 SECTION 3. In carrying out its charge, the working group shall examine, report on, and make
18 recommendations regarding, the following matters:

- 19 a) the appropriateness of the financing and reimbursement provisions of chapter 71, section
20 89(nn) and section 89(pp) as a mechanism for the financing of charter schools; including
21 examining the feasibility of designating commonwealth charter school tuition as a separate line
22 item in the state budget, and including examining alternative proposals for financing charter
23 schools, such as limiting the cost to sending districts;
- 24 b) the extent to which the reimbursement provisions of chapter 71, section 89(pp) are effective at
25 minimizing the adverse financial impact of charter schools on sending school districts while
26 providing sufficient resources for the successful operation of charter schools;
- 27 c) the extent to, and means by, which the dissemination of successful innovation programs called
28 for in section 89(s) has occurred;

29 d) the obstacles to broader utilization of Horace Mann charters as a vehicle to achieve the
30 objectives articulated in section 89(d);

31 e) the appropriateness of the current application and approval process in ensuring community support and
32 need for a charter in a particular district or region, as well as the extent to which the current process
33 provides adequate notice for affected districts, and including whether to require prior local approval;

34 f) the extent to which charter schools are or should be held to the same or similar rules and public
35 disclosure requirements as district schools, particularly in the areas of enrollment projections, financial
36 reporting and accounting requirements, and the extent to which the state agencies that oversee charter
37 schools are enforcing current law, as well as their capacity for increasing oversight; and,

38 g) the extent to which charter schools enroll special education and limited English proficient students
39 compared with district enrollment, examining allegations of discrimination and inappropriate or
40 inadequate provision of services, as well as the rate of return of special education or LEP students to the
41 district schools.

42 SECTION 4. The working group shall file a report containing its recommendations, including legislation
43 and regulations necessary to carry out its recommendations, with the joint committee on education and the
44 clerks of the house and senate within one year of the effective date of this act, but no later than December
45 15, 2010.